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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21, 2007

In Today's Papers

US Generals Pay 'Surprise' Visit to Ankara
All papers report the Vice Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff General James Cartwright and the Commander of the Multinational Forces in Iraq, General David Petraeus, paid a "surprise" visit to Ankara on Tuesday for talks with Deputy Chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) General Ergin Saygun.

The US generals and their Turkish counterparts discussed the latest measures taken against the the PKK in northern Iraq and ways to share real time intelligence. Mainstream Milliyet says that, in the meeting, the Turks asked the US to share satellite images showing activities at PKK camps. Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak claims General Saygun said both sides worked on the coordination of cross-border operations. According to mainstream Sabah, new security measures, applied after the November 5 meeting between Erdogan and Bush, were discussed. An unnamed senior Turkish official said the measures were below Turkish expectations, adding that it was not possible to see immediate results. Sabah reports General Petraeus' special envoy General Michael Barbaro went to Erbil to discuss measures against the PKK with Kurdish Regional Authority head, Necirvan Barzani. Several papers note that the separate statements issued from the US Embassy in Ankara and TGS emphasized that the PKK was a "mutual enemy." Yeni Safak says Prime Minister Erdogan and TGS chief General Yasar Buyukanit will meet Wednesday to evaluate developments.

Erdogan, Baykal, Bahceli on DTP, the PKK
All papers report that opposition CHP leader Deniz Baykal in a party group meeting on Tuesday characterizes Prime Minister Erdogan's call for the PKK's 'laying down of arms' as "the rhetoric of the PKK." "Now they make demands against our national unity. We see a typical disintegration period. We have seen this movie before," said Baykal. The far right MHP leader Devlet Bahceli, addressing his party group, lashed out at Erdogan for "hiding his true intentions" for an amnesty for the terrorists. "They have been gradually calling for political amnesty to include the Imrali murderer

[Abdullah Ocalan]. The DTP is the Ankara branch office of Mount Kandil," Bahceli stressed, criticizing the ruling AKP government for remaining silent in the face of "DTP challenges against the state, constitution and laws."

"There's no general amnesty in our agenda," Erdogan responded to Baykal and Bahceli in a meeting with his ruling AKP group. "We are not going to take orders from the CHP or MHP regarding a cross-border operation; our government and military will determine the time for such an action. We are not cowboys with guns in hand," Erdogan emphasized. Erdogan also called on the DTP to "choose either arms or democracy."

Turkish al-Qaeda Suspects Escape from Abu Ghraib
Mainstream Milliyet's front page story claims that two al-Qaeda suspects, Burhan Kus and Sadettin Aktas, blamed for twin suicide car bomb attacks in Istanbul in November 2003, escaped from Abu Ghraib prison. The two escaped as they were being transferred to another prison. Kus and Aktas were arrested in Iraq and put in Abu Ghraib in 2005. A team of Istanbul police went to Abu Ghraib the same year to interrogate the suspects. US officials confirmed to the Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) that the two suspects escaped, says Milliyet.

12 Turkish Firms on CPI's UFO List for Iraq
Yeni Safak's front page story reports on the recent report by the US Center for Public Integrity (CPI) on contracting in Iraq and Afghanistan. According to the paper, in the last three years, the majority of contracts in Iraq and Afghanistan were awarded to only 100 companies, with "US VP Cheney's Halliburton" taking the lead with \$16 billion. Security firms such as DynCorp and Blackwater -

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companies held responsible for civilian deaths - are also high in the list. \$20.4 billion in contracts went to "UFO companies" (unidentified foreign organizations) of which twelve are Turkish, says Yeni Safak.

Editorial Opinion: Turkish Domestic Politics/PKK

Managing editor Ismet Berkan of liberal-intellectual daily Radikal wrote: "When the American black community fought for equal rights, Martin Luther King Jr. emerged as a great leader for the movement. His 1964 'I have a Dream' speech became the cornerstone of the civil rights movement. Because of MLK's leadership, the movement pursued peaceful civil disobedience and never engaged in violence. At that time, there were other groups who believed in achieving the same goal through violence, such as the Black Panthers. However, MLK's powerful movement left the Black Panthers on the sidelines. The essence of Turkey's Kurdish problem is an equality issue. Some in the Kurdish community do not feel they have equal civil rights under the law. Some have chosen to fight this fight as PKK terrorists. During the last 23 years, we've lost nearly 40,000 lives, and most of them were Kurds. And yet, during the last 23 years, no leader like MLK has emerged from the Kurdish community. Today, we desperately need a Martin Luther King figure for Kurds who can denounce violence and work effectively for civil rights. The pro-Kurdish party DTP had the chance, but they simply ignored it."

Okay Gonensin argued in mainstream daily Vatan: "Turkey can talk about a comprehensive amnesty plan for the PKK when and if the PKK disarms and disbands. The implementation of an amnesty program cannot and should not cover those who engage in drug trafficking and murder. Those who can leave their arms with no blood on their hands deserve an amnesty. In any case, Turkish people cannot digest any amnesty plan unless the main preconditions of disarmament are met. At this point, Turkey should do everything possible to encourage peace and democracy. Turkey must refrain from any step which might play into the PKK's violent tactics."

TV Highlights
NTV

Domestic News

- In Ankara on Tuesday, Turkey and Iran signed an agreement for electricity cooperation, despite warnings from the US. Turkish Energy Minister Hilmi Guler said that, despite US reactions, Turkey and Iran would sign further agreements for cooperation in oil and natural gas.
- Joost Lagendijk, the co-chairman of the Turkey-EU joint parliamentary commission, warned that the lawsuit to ban pro-Kurdish DTP will harm Turkey's EU entry drive.
- The opposition Freedom and Democracy Party (ODP) leader Ufuk Uras has submitted a proposal to parliament for Turkey to sign the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture.
- German migration minister Maria Bohmer will visit Turkey on Tuesday for a three-day visit to discuss the integration of the Turks living in Germany with State Minister Nimet Cubukcu, Labor Minister Faruk Celik and State Minister Said Yazicioglu.
- PM Erdogan and his ruling AKP MPs will gather in Kizilcahamam over the weekend to discuss constitutional reforms. The AKP is expected to make its constitutional draft public on December 15.

International News

- Washington makes the last preparations for the November 27 Annapolis conference for Middle East peace to which 49 countries,

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including Turkey, have been invited.

- Kurdish regional government officials in northern Iraq said they have tightened measures against the PKK terrorists.
- The US State Department has dropped plans to force diplomats to serve in Iraq now that it has found enough volunteers for vacant posts.
- A helicopter of the US-led coalition forces crashed near Baghdad on Tuesday, killing two soldiers and wounding 12.

WILSON